



Samba minus Emerson

AFP, Ulsan

Brazil's World Cup plans were in disarray Sunday after a freak training ground accident put their inspirational captain Emerson out of the tournament.

The AS Roma midfielder dislocated his right shoulder when he dived to stop a shot from Rivaldo as he took his turn as goalkeeper in the final training session before their opening Group C match against Turkey here Monday.

"The shoulder is dislocated," said team doctor Carlos Runco. "This injury takes four weeks to recover so he will not be able to play any more in this World Cup."

Brazil have sent a request to football's world governing body FIFA for authorisation to call another player. It was not clear who that might be, although speculation centred on discarded great Romario whose exclusion from the squad caused uproar in Brazil.

Emerson, who has played 44 times for Brazil and scored five goals, hurt the shoulder when he dived to the right just minutes into the training session at the Ulsan Munsu

Stadium.

He stayed down for a full five minutes, surrounded by his teammates, before he was helped up. He lingered on the sidelines for several minutes before leaving the field, taking no further part in the session.

Emerson, 26, later left for the team hotel with his arm in a sling.

"When Emerson fell we didn't immediately think it was serious, but he stayed on the floor and we knew something had happened," said defender Roberto Carlos.

Rivaldo said Emerson's inexperience as a goalkeeper contributed to the injury.

"I shot on goal and I think Emerson had a problem because he is not a goalkeeper. He doesn't know how to fall on the floor, that's why he injured the shoulder," he said.

Ironically, Emerson had warned before their final warm-up game in Malaysia last month that fitness and injuries could prove to be the decisive factor in the World Cup.

A tough-tackling player, Emerson spent most of his career in

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PHOTO: AFP
BRAVO BATIGOL: Argentina ace Gabriel Batistuta celebrates after scoring the winner against Nigeria at Ibaraki yesterday.

Viva Batigol

REUTERS, Ibaraki

Gabriel Batistuta repaid coach Marcelo Bielsa's faith in him when he headed home a 63rd minute goal to give World Cup favourites Argentina a 1-0 win over Nigeria in their opening group F match on Sunday.

Batistuta rose above team mate Mauricio Pochettino as both were looking to get onto the end of a deep corner from Juan Sebastian Veron, but Batistuta's striker's instincts ensured he was in a better position to score.

It gave him a place in an exclusive club of 10 players who have scored 10 or more goals in World Cup history, leaving him four behind record-holder Gerd Mueller, who scored a total of 14 in 1970 and 1974, when he helped Germany win

a second World Cup.

It was Batistuta's 56th goal for Argentina in his 76th international but, more importantly, gave them three points from a match they dominated for long periods, but struggled to control in a tough group that also includes England and Sweden.

Batistuta won his place in the side ahead of Hernan Crespo with Bielsa saying there was little to choose between the two. Crespo came on late in the game as Batistuta went off to a standing ovation from the fans.

He was close to scoring several times as the Nigerian defence struggled to cope with far post crosses, not least when he headed a similar effort to his goal just wide in the first half. But his perseverance paid off to Argentina's deserved benefit.

Substitute Kily Gonzalez almost added a second goal near the end of the match when he broke down the left and fired in a shot that impressive Nigerian keeper Ike Shorunmu did well to block.

Veron was relieved to get the win. "We're very happy to have achieved an important victory over tough rivals. It was a hard match we dominated for most of the 90 minutes and had lots of chances to score but it was very difficult," he said.

"What was important was the team. This is a very difficult group with great teams and great players and we were able to show the world what we are worth as a team."

Argentina top the group before

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PHOTO: AFP
HEART ATTACK! A concerned Brazil squad including coach Luis Filipe Scolari (R) stand around captain Emerson (Inset) who receives medical attention at Ulsan yesterday.

BRAZIL VS TURKEY

Target lost pride

AP, Ulsan

Somewhere along the way, the Brazilians lost their cockiness, their "beautiful game" and their supremacy in the soccer world. The quest for redemption begins Monday against Turkey.

The three R's -- Ronaldo, Rivaldo and Ronaldinho -- lead Brazil against Turkey's stalwart defence on Monday in the first and probably decisive game of Group C. The winner is all but assured a berth in the second round, with modest

Costa Rica and World Cup newcomer China completing the group.

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TEAMS

Brazil (Formation 3-5-2; Jersey numbers in the beginning): 1-Marcos; 3-Lucio, 4-Roque Junior, 3-Lucio; 2-Cafu, 8-Gilberto Silva, 19-Juninho, 11-Ronaldinho, 6-Roberto Carlos; 9-Ronaldo, 10-Rivaldo.

Turkey (Formation 3-3-3-1; Jersey numbers in the beginning): 1-Rustu Recber; 4-Fatih Akyel, 16-Umit Ozat, 5-Alpay Ozalan; 22-Umit Davala, 8-Tugay Kerimoglu, 18-Ergun Penbe; 7-Okan Buruk, 10-Yildirim Basturk, 11-Hasan Sas; 9-Hakan Sukur
Referee: Kim Young-joo (South Korea)

A great escape act

AFP, Busan

South Africa's Quinton Fortune chose a dramatic moment to net his first international goal Sunday by

smashing home an injury-time penalty to secure a 2-2 draw with Paraguay.

Manchester United midfielder Fortune completed a stunning

recovery for the 'Bafana Bafana' (The Boys), who had trailed 2-0 with half an hour left to play.

But the South Africans stuck to their guns superbly to take a point in their opening Group B game as the 25-year-old buried the first spot-kick of the tournament past Paraguayan keeper Ricardo Tavares, who was in for the suspended Jose Luis Chilavert.

Tavares fouled Sibisiso Zuma, as the striker raced into the area, and Fortune kept his cool to score the penalty.

Although the South Africans are still looking for their first win at a World Cup tournament after four matches to date, the way they refused to buckle in the face of adversity will have delighted coach Jomo Sono, whose men now face unknown quantities Slovenia and Spain.

Effervescent striker Roque Santa Cruz and defender Francisco Arce had put Paraguay seemingly on the road to victory by scoring either side of half-time.

Bayern Munich striker Santa Cruz turned the South African defence inside out in the opening period and scored with a near post header after 39 minutes from an Arce cross.

Ten minutes after the restart the game looked as good as over when Arce smacked home a tremendous freekick from out on the left.

South Africa pulled one back six minutes later when Estanislao Struway deflected a low Aaron Mokoena shot past his own keeper and just when it seemed they would be unable to rescue a point Fortune pulled them level.

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PHOTO: AFP

CRUZ CONTROL! Paraguay's Roque Santa Cruz (L) is delighted after scoring against South Africa while captain Carlos Gamarra rushes in to congratulate at Busan yesterday.

Saudis in shame

AFP, Riyadh

Saudi newspapers on Sunday angrily rounded on the national coach and players after the "shame" and "scandal" of the team's 8-0 hammering by Germany.

"Come back ... It's a scandal," read a huge headline on the front page of the special World Cup supplement of Al-Youm daily.

"No defence, no midfield, no attack ... not even goalkeeping," read another headline in the newspaper after the debacle in Sapporo on Saturday.

Ar-Riyadiyah sports daily described the defeat as an "giant earthquake that tarnished the 'Green's' reputation".

It also said the defeat at the country's third successive tournament turned "Saudi's World Cup dream into a nightmare."

But commentator Ahmad Sadeq Deyab wrote in the same daily that it was a wake-up call.

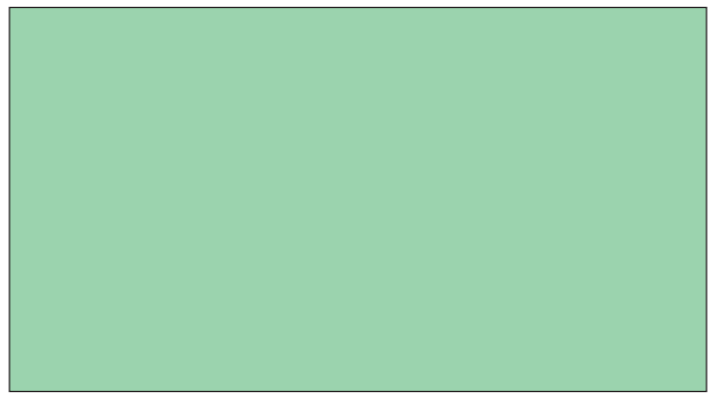
"Perhaps we badly needed this harsh defeat by the Germans to wake up from our cosy dreams and deal with matters with a great sense of logic, away from extreme passion," Deyab said.

For Al-Watan it was not shameful for Saudi Arabia to suffer such a big defeat at the hands of triple World Cup winners Germany.

"But what is not realistic, unacceptable and shameful is the way we performed and the level of our game," it said.

The daily put the blame squarely on the coach Nasser al-Johar "who played without a plan" and the players who did not play at all.

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CUP CORNER

REUTERS, Seoul

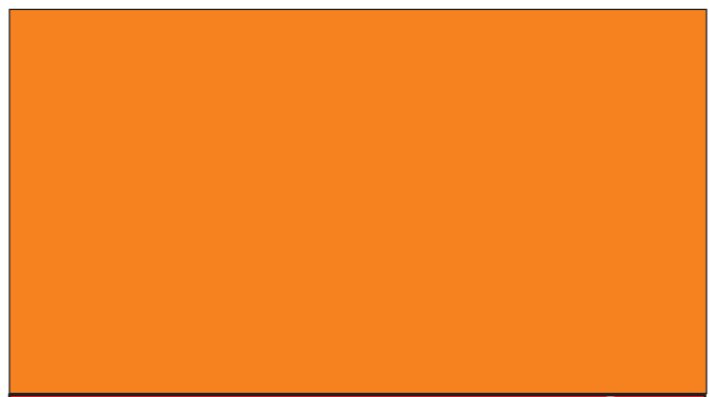
FIFA dismissed complaints about the new, high-tech ball being used at the World Cup finals and suggested on Sunday that the players had simply imagined the problems.

Although England's David Beckham is among its fans, some players have called the new Adidas 'Fevernova' ball uncontrollable, too big or just plain "stupid."

But FIFA's communications director Keith Cooper told a news conference: "It's a bit strange. The ball produced for the World Cup was given to qualifying teams in December. It is not as if players have never seen it before."

"Most of the teams have been playing with it for six months. There is no reason to believe it behaves differently in Korea and Japan than in any other part of the world."

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TODAY'S MATCHES		
Croatia vs Mexico Venue: Niigata Time: 12:30 pm	Brazil vs Turkey Venue: Ulsan Time: 3:00 pm	Italy vs Ecuador Venue: Sapporo Time: 5:30 pm

Babies not allowed!

REUTERS, Sapporo

An eight-month-old Canadian baby was denied access to the Sapporo World Cup stadium for Germany's 8-0 demolition of Saudi Arabia because he did not have a ticket, a Japanese newspaper has reported.

"My son was not yet born when we bought tickets to the game. We had been told that the baby could enter the stadium even without a ticket," the mother, not named in the Mainichi Shimbun report, was quoted as saying.

According to the report, the baby was refused entry on Saturday even though his mother said she had been told by officials that she would be permitted to take him to the match.

The paper quoted an official of the local organising committee as saying: "It has been decided, as a rule, not to allow those without a ticket - regardless of age - to enter a stadium or ride the shuttle buses. It's stated clearly on ticket application forms."

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Leave WC ball alone

INTERNET, Seoul

FIFA has told disgruntled players to stop complaining about the World Cup's official ball and get on with the game.

"The ball conforms in every way to FIFA standards and regulations," Keith Cooper, spokesman for the world football governing body said Sunday.

Italian goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon is among several players to have expressed reservations about the new Fevernova, a hi-tech gold, red and green ball made by

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Holder's Zizou hope

AFP, Seoul

Injured French midfielder Zinedine Zidane is responding well to treatment and has begun jogging, giving the world champions a glimmer of hope that he could return for their crucial second World Cup match.

Zidane attended a hospital here on Sunday to undergo more tests and receive treatment to the torn thigh muscle which forced him to miss the world champion's shock 1-0 defeat to Senegal in the tournament curtain-raiser.

France would dearly love to speed up their star midfielder's return as they prepare for their match against Uruguay on Thursday, a game Roger Lemerre's team cannot afford to lose.

A statement from the French team's medical staff said the 29-year-old two-time World Footballer of the Year would receive increasingly frequent treatment.

"The injury is responding favourably to treatment which has allowed us to follow the prescribed course of

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PHOTO: AFP

AT LEAST HE HIS RUNNING! Zinedine Zidane (L) jogs with France team physiotherapist Frederick Mankowski at Seoul yesterday.